

THE *Current*

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The Plot Thickens With Award

The journey from idea to completed book can be long and tortuous, but a UC Santa Barbara scholar's task has received a boost from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). [Swati Rana](#), an assistant professor of [English](#), has won an outright grant from the NEH that will allow her to work on her first book.

The \$50,400 award will support Rana as she writes "Retrograde Minorities: Problem Characters in U.S. Ethnic Literature, 1900-1960." "I am delighted and honored to receive the NEH Awards for Faculty grant for my research," she said. "This grant supports work on my first book, which explores the problem of minority writers and characters who disavow rather than embrace their ethnic or racial identity. These retrograde identifications pose a pressing challenge not only for literary history but also for progressive politics in the 21st century.

"I am eager to devote myself full-time to this study," she continued, "and am grateful to my colleagues in the English department, the American Cultures & Global Contexts Center, and the Hemispheric South/s Research Initiative, as well as everyone else who has informed and inspired this project and my work."

Rana specializes in 20th-century American literature, comparative ethnic literature and transnational American studies. Her research focuses on the relationship between literary and social forms, exploring how ethnic literature represents the complexities of minority identity and how ethnic writers creatively negotiate and refigure pressing social questions.

Enda Duffy, professor and chair of the Department of English, called Rana “a brilliant young scholar-teacher whose work is richly deserving of this award. An inspiring teacher, she is also a distinguished poet. Her scholarship is characterized both by its meticulous research and by its adventurous, searching quality. Professor Rana brings to the study of ethnic literatures and cultures a striking range of multi-ethnic reference and a determination to expand the horizons of the fields in question. Here is an exciting younger junior whose research achievements are already highly impressive. Her colleagues in the English Department at UC Santa Barbara join me in congratulating her on winning this highly competitive NEH award.”

Rana’s grant was part of NEH funding for 290 projects in 43 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. The \$16.3 million in grants will support a variety of humanities-based research and programs.

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.